

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A
SUBJ: BILATERAL COMMUNICATION RELATIONSHIP

REF: USIA 8635

1. RE: PARA 2, REFTEL, POST BELIEVES THERE MAY BE A SEMANTIC PROBLEM
HERE. POST DID NOT INTEND TO IMPLY THAT NO COMMUNICATIONS TENSIONS
OF IMPORTANCE EXIST BETWEEN US AND BANGLADESH. OUR ESSAY LISTS SEVERA
L
PROBLEM AREAS WHICH ARE OF CONCERN AND WHICH REQUIRE OUR ATTENTION.
THESE PROBLEMS ARE NOT, AT PRESENT, "MAJOR" IN THE SENSE THAT THEY
WOULD LED TO COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN AND/OR DETERIORATING RELATIONS
BETWEEN BDG AND USG, BUT THEY ARE CERTAINLY SIGNIFICANT.

2. POST DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT US-BD COMMUNICATION RELATIONSHIP IS
"HEAVILY" WEIGHTED IN FAVOR OF ASSETS, NOR DID WE INTEND OUR ESSAY
TO CONVEY THAT IMPRESSION. HOWEVER, IT IS TRUE THAT OUR CURRENT
RELATIONSHIP HAS, IN COMPARATIVE TERMS, MORE FAVORABLE ASPECTS
THAN PROBLEMS.

3. POST BELIEVES SITUATION CAN BE CLARIFIED BY MODIFYING ESSAY AS
INDICATED BELOW:
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(A) FIRST SENTENCE, PARA 2 OF ESSAY WOULD READ: "ALTHOUGH,
ON BALANCE, THE PRESENT AMERICAN-BANGLADESHI COMMUNICATION RELATION-
SHIP CONTAINS MORE ASSETS THAN DEBITS, IMPORTANT PROBLEM AREAS
EXIST WHICH HINDER BILATERAL INFORMATION INTERCHANGE AND WHICH
REPRESENT POTENTIAL DIFFICULTIES FOR BDG-USG RELATIONS." REST
OF PARA 2 OF ESSAY TO READ AS BEFORE.

(B) PARA 5 OF ESSAY WOULD READ: "ALTHOUGH BANGLADESH IS USUALLY FOUND AMONG THE MORE MODERATE OF THE DEVELOPING NATIONS, THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES OF OPINION BETWEEN USG AND BDG IN SOME POLITICAL/ECONOMIC AREAS. THE BANGLADESH POSITION IN THE NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE IS AT ODDS WITH THE UNITED STATES ON SUCH QUESTIONS AS DEBT RELIEF FOR THE LDC'S, THE STRUCTURE AND FINANCING OF A COMMON FUND FOR COMMODITIES, AND LAW OF THE SEA. A MORE IMPORTANT SET OF DIFFERENCES, BASICALLY TACTICAL BUT HAVING CONSIDERABLE, OFTEN NEGATIVE, IMPACT ON UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, INVOLVE THE MEANS AND TIMING OF U.S. ASSISTANCE, BOTH FOOD AND DEVELOPMENT AID. U.S. RESPONSES TO BDG REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE ARE CONTROLLED BY LEGAL AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS WHICH ARE LIABLE TO LOCAL MISUNDERSTANDING. AS FOR INTERNATIONAL POLITICS, THE BDG AND LOCAL OPINION LEADERS HAVE BEEN CRITICAL OF AMERICAN POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST. WHILE RECENT US PEACE INITIATIVES HAVE BEEN WELCOMED, THE US IS STILL WIDELY VIEWED AS TOO SUPPORTIVE FOR ISRAEL. CLOSER TO HOME, MANY BANGLADESHIS HAVE VIEWED WITH SUSPICION WHAT THEY CONSIDER TO BE RECENT AMERICAN EFFORTS TO PROMOTE INDIAN HEGEMONY IN THE ASIAN SUBCONTINENT."

4. AFTER PARA 7 IN ESSAY, ADD FOLLOWING PARAS:

PARA 8--IN CONTEXT OF FOREGOING, POST PROGRAMMING CAN ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING U.S.S. MISSION OBJECTIVES: (A) PROMOTE FRIENDLY RELATIONS

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BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND BANGLADESH AND WHERE POSSIBLE, SEEK BANGLADESHI COOPERATION ON INTERNATIONAL QUESTIONS OF MUTUAL INTEREST ;

(B) SUPPORT BANGLADESHI EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE SELF-SUSTAINING SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. (C) PROMOTE BANGLADESHI UNDERSTANDING OF THE AMERICAN COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS; AND (D) ADVANCE MUTUAL SOCIAL/CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE PEOPLES OF AMERICA AND BANGLADESH.

PARA 9--OBJECTIVE (A) ABOVE CAN BEST BE PURSUED THROUGH PROGRAMS WHICH HIGHLIGHT THE COMMON GOALS AND INTERESTS OF BANGLADESH AND THE US AND WHICH SEEK TO BUILD UNDERSTANDING OF AND CONFIDENCE IN AMERICA'S ROLE ON THE WORLD SCENE. OBJECTIVE (B) CAN BE PURSUED THROUGH ACTIVITIES WHICH PRESENT THE LATEST AMERICAN DEVELOPMENTS IN SUCH FIELD AS SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AGRICULTURE, EDUCATION, MANAGEMENT AND MASS COMMUNICATIONS, INsofar AS THEY ARE RELEVANT AND OF INTEREST TO BANGLADESH. OBJECTIVE (C) CAN BEST BE APPROACHED BY DEALING WITH THE PAST AND PRESENT SOCIAL-POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT IN AMERICA AND SHOWING HOW THIS HAS HELPED DEVELOP A RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS WHICH CARRIES OVER INTO U.S. FOREIGN POLICY. MUTUAL CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING (OBJECTIVE D) CAN BE ENHANCED AS A BYPRODUCT OF THE FOREGOING ACTIVI-

TIES, AS WELL AS THROUGH PERSON-TO-PERSON CONTACTS HERE AND IN THE US (EXCHANGE PROGRAMS PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN THIS), CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS OF EACH COUNTRY PRESENTED TO AUDIENCES OF THE OTHER, AND PROGRAMS TO BE DEVELOPED FOR AN ONGOING TWO-WAY FLOW OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE HISTORY, ARTS AND SOCIAL DYNAMICS OF EACH NATION.

PARA 10--NONE OF THE ABOVE OBJECTIVES CAN BE ACHIEVED IN A SHORT-TERM TIME FRAME. ALL REQUIRE LONG-TERM PROGRAMMING, WITH PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO EXCHANGE ACTIVITIES--IV GRANTS TO THE STATES, SPECIALIZED STUDY OPPORTUNITIES IN AMERICA FOR BANGLADESHI CIVIL SERVANTS AND MEDIA PERSONNEL, STUDY AND RESEARCH GRANTS FOR PROFESSORS AND STUDENTS IN BOTH DIRECTIONS--AND EMPHASIS ON PROGRAMMING IN THIS COUNTRY WHICH PROVIDES MAXIMUM POSSIBILITIES FOR UNCLASSIFIED

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DIALOGUE BETWEEN MISSION OFFICERS, VISITING SPEAKERS, AND BANGLADESHIS.

PARA 11--A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN THE MODEST BD-US EXCHANGE PROGRAM WOULD BE A LOGICAL FIRST STEP TOWARD IMPROVING AMERICAN UNDERSTANDING OF BANGLADESH. IF GRANTEEES COULD BE GIVEN GREATER OPPORTUNITIES TO INFORM AMERICANS ABOUT THEIR COUNTRY THROUGH PUBLIC APPEARANCES BEFORE CIVIC GROUPS, MEDIA INTERVIEWS AND CLASSROOM DISCUSSIONS AT AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES. THE POST BELIEVES THAT THE BDG WOULD WELCOME USG SUPPORT FOR AN AMERICAN VISIT BY BANGLADESHI CULTURAL GROUPS, E.G., A FOLK DANCE OR A THEATER GROUP, AND WOULD APPRECIATE A RETURN VISIT TO BANGLADESH BY A SIMILAR U.S. GROUP. IN SUM, ANY OVERTURES ON OUR PART TO INCREASE CULTURAL INTERCHANGE BETWEEN OUR TWO NATIONS ARE LIKELY TO BE POSITIVELY RECEIVED HERE, SO LONG AS IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT THE BDG WOULD BE ABLE TO SPARE LITTLE IN THE WAY OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO BACK THEM UP.

5. AMBASSADOR CONCURS IN ABOVE.
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